Contemporary Literary Review India

Print ISSN 2250-3366 | Online ISSN 2394-6075

Vol. 10, No. 2

CLRI May 2023

Page 75-95

Society Reacts to Madness: Representation of Insanity in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre and Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway

Radhika Gupta

Research Scholar

Abstract: On one hand, Brontë's Victorian Realist text, *Jane Eyre*, is miles apart from Woolf's quintessential Modernist text, *Mrs Dalloway*. While, on the other hand, both texts are connected through a similar anxiety to portray madness: a dangerous antithesis to society itself. This paper attempts an analysis of both texts' supposed mad characters, Bertha and Septimus, respectively, who posit as alter egos to the eponymous protagonists. Often declared as a radical other, or controlled through physical impositions, or perceived as a threatening force, madness has constantly been a victimised and ostracised entity in society. However, by bringing these two distinct texts in a conversation, this paper attempts to capture the crucial changes in the attitude towards madness as the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth.

Keywords: Body and asylum, doubles, madness, social context, subaltern identity.

Introduction

Madness is often viewed as a private phenomenon, a person's inevitable 'inward turn': a theoretical antithesis of society that can translate in its material obliteration from social interactions. Yet, excluding the "mad" from social existence is not equivalent to excluding madness from the discursive field as attitudes to madness still largely govern how madness is caused, understood, treated, or even appropriated. However, these attitudes are not stagnant: they evolve with time through the shifting medical conception, ethical framework, and structuring of society. By undertaking a study of these two different texts, *Jane Eyre* and *Mrs Dalloway* (former, a Victorian Realist text, and latter, a quintessential Modernist one), and their portrayal of insanity, this paper attempts to capture a movement in the social aspect of the madness through the turn of the century while also remarking on

certain unchanging characteristics in the perception and reception of madness. While Victorian literature is decisively concerned with placing a person in the larger social order, even the Modernist texts' supposed inward movement can be contextualised within its outer reality:

> *What modernist narratives suggest, on this reading, is that mental states have the character they do because of the world in which they arise, as a way of responding to possibilities (and exigencies) for acting afforded by that world. (Herman 253)*

Analysis of these texts also allows us to ponder on their different literary treatments of madness, even if, on the surface, both the novels use the mad figures to create a parallel to their eponymous protagonists: at times employed as doubles, at times as foils. The symbolic use of these "mad" figures is complemented by witnessing the socio-historical definitions of madness: a vicious alterity, a shameful stain, a prophetic giftedness, a bodily infection, an internal malady, or an unsocial monstrosity.

Mad as the “Other”

By situating madness in the secondary characters, both texts indicate the ideological "othering" of the insane. Posited as opposed to the values of society, insanity is marginalised, if not completely invisibilized. Associated with monstrosity, bestiality and criminality, madness becomes the "other" to a morally and rationally sound humanness. Following the valorisation of rational thought in the Enlightenment period, the so-called unreasonable madness becomes the natural villain of society in the upcoming ages, grouped with the other outcasts in the increasingly capitalist world: sloth, poverty, and crime. As Foucault points out: “This community acquired

an ethical power of segregation, which permitted it to eject, as into another world, all forms of social uselessness" (54). In its lack of social functionality in the rigid moral order of the nineteenth century and in the rigid utilitarian one of the twentieth century, ostracising madness becomes a common feature of both texts. Bertha Mason's insanity, in *Jane Eyre*, is predicated on her immoral conduct which slowly transforms her into an animalistic demon, as described by Jane in her first real encounter with her:

> *In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (JE 352)*

In Jane's description, Bertha is already robbed of her humanistic aspects as she is reduced to a beastly form, or an animalistic spectacle, incompatible with the civilised society. Complying with the Gothic tradition, Bertha is the ghostly presence in the novel, a dark force which needs to be battled with by the protagonists of the text. From the very beginning, she is introduced through her disembodied demonic laughter and savage cries, which get escalated to criminal acts of life-threatening attacks on Mr Rochester, Richard Mason and Jane culminating in the eventual burning down of Thornfield. Established as a menacing entity, Bertha's madness has transformed her into a villain on the one hand: murderer and arsonist, and a monster on the other: "First seen darkly as a ghost, then as a goblin, as vampiric and lycanthropic, Bertha never really loses the mysterious qualities that make her very humanness suspect" (Gurdin 147). The novel intricately links her madness to her wickedness, and to her dehumanisation;

thus justifying her isolation and eventual annihilation from society on the triple qualifiers of insanity, immorality and brutish devilry.

Conversely, Woolf doesn't attribute subhuman viciousness to her mad character in *Mrs Dalloway,* instead, Septimus is presented as a deeply sensitive, feeling persona, who is seen as the victim and not the perpetrator in the text. However, he suffers a similar fate to Bertha Mason as an ostracised and eradicated figure, and it is only in his social guilt that he differs from her. Part of an already morally compromised world — tainted by the spiritual degradation and physical destruction caused by the war — Septimus is the scapegoat who will embody the collective ethical failings of society and bring about a possible redemption. Karen S. McPherson defines the social scapegoat in similar terms: "The scapegoat answers society's need to contain its guilt. When a scapegoat is used for ritual sacrifice, it is society as a whole (and not individual) whose crime is being expiated" (140). Septimus is hounded by a feeling of guilt for his inability to feel, for Evans' death, for his failed marriage, for his role in the war and so on (*MD* 74), however, the narrative makes it apparent that it is transferred guilt as it is the burden of society's crime that he is carrying. Yet, Septimus' guilt is not limited to a ceremonial figure of a scapegoat; he is also at fault for being a possible disturbance to the civic order in his denial to perform his designated role. An incompetent husband, out of job, and disconnected from other people, Septimus becomes superfluous to society's needs. Foucault argues that idleness becomes equated to madness as both become a social aberration: "The nineteenth century would consent, would even insist that to the mad and to them alone be transferred these lands on which, a hundred and fifty years before, men had sought to pen the poor, the vagabond, the unemployed" (56). Septimus is declared mad, therefore, for his idleness, and for his lack of contribution to social welfare. Furthermore,

Septimus challenges the narrative of happiness, which society promises to its individuals, through his suicide threats. Septimus is, in fact, shown to reasonably argue in favour of death: “He would argue with her about killing themselves; and explain how wicked people were; how he could see them making up lies as they passed in the street” (*MD* 54). Septimus blames society for its falseness and cruelty for his suicidal thoughts which makes Septimus extremely dangerous: threatening the notions of common prosperity and collective happiness carefully posed by society. Bradshaw, an agent of society, recognises in Septimus these “unsocial impulses” (83) and declares it as “a question of law” (79) to exile him:

> *Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion. (MD 81)*

Sir William’s work gains national importance where, as a psychiatrist, he can identify the ‘mad’ and isolate them for the normal functioning of the social order. Madness, therefore, is a social anomaly, almost akin to a crime, as it challenges the discourse of uniformly happy, productive citizens by allowing people who are out of “proportion”. In other words, it is the threat embodied in the ‘mad’ of positing alternate ways of thinking and existing that Bradshaw goes out to curb. Bradshaw’s particular role, equally as a medical practitioner and a social agent, in affirming the social isolation of insanity is looked at in further detail later on while establishing the connection between asylum and judicial discipline. The narrative, ultimately, establishes a converse relationship between the prosperity of society and its so-called mad. Being antagonistic to what Bradshaw calls the “human nature” (74), it is Septimus' failure as a useful citizen, unlike Bertha's wild

vileness, that condemns his madness as the "other", as an outsider.

Even before Septimus and Bertha are deemed as the "other" for their madness, they already inhabit a marginal position, a subaltern identity, by the virtue of their class and race, respectively. Excluded from the upper-class privilege of making decisions, Septimus is sent to the war prompted by a borrowed ideology and returns disillusioned and shell-shocked. Septimus goes to the war “to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare’s plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in square” (*MD* 70). Oblivious to the larger political dynamics of the war, Septimus carries a heavily idealised and romanticized image of his country and to preserve that is his sole governing instinct in going to the war. However, he returns from the war with an inability to feel (71) and enters a marriage which becomes a travesty of his previous fanciful notions about love and married life. He becomes a pawn struggling to fit into roles prescribed for him by his social superiors. His class position also excludes him from the discourse of his madness, where he will not only be silenced from speaking out his malady, but his madness will be actively interpreted by others (whose authority is fuelled by their class status). Struggling to communicate, Septimus remains unheard or labelled nonsensical: “Talking nonsense to frighten your wife?” (76) comments Dr Holmes, while his madness is appropriated as a topic of gossip in a party of the rich or as a narrative to enable political agendas (147).

Similarly, Bertha is also precluded from voicing her narrative, where all she can make are animalistic noises, savage movements and shadowy appearances. Even Grace Poole, “the madwoman’s public representative” (Gilbert and Gubar 350), cannot become an outlet for Bertha’s suppressed voice as her silence has been bought by Mr Rochester’s socio-economic might. Built on an uncertain racial category of Creole, Bertha's

description echoes popular nineteenth-century racial stereotypes (also similar to Conrad's description of natives in *Heart of Darkness*): "It was a discoloured face— it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!" (*JE* 340-41). In fact, the novel repeatedly associates negativity with darkness: the manipulative vanity of Blanche Ingram, the cruelty of Mrs Reed, and the violence of Bertha. Susan L. Meyer further corroborates this as she remarks: "in *Jane Eyre* Brontë consistently associates unhealthy, contagious environments with racial 'otherness' and with oppression" (261). Already ill-disposed towards her due to her almost supernatural evil presence in the novel, the readers consume Mr Rochester's reading of Bertha, who unequivocally underpins Bertha's race as an essential path to her madness. As soon as Mr Rochester's crime of attempted bigamy is revealed, he undercuts that by demeaning Bertha: "Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations? Her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard" (*JE* 351). Before even the readers are allowed a glimpse of Bertha, Rochester attempts to convince all that she is an unsuitable wife. He also carefully alludes to her family, especially her mother, to leave no ambiguity about the cause of Bertha's madness: an inherited racial malady. This initial exposition on Bertha is further developed by Mr Rochester through the course of the novel as he conjures himself as a tragic hero fettered to a "bad, mad, and embruted partner" (351). This allows him to ingeniously justify his licentious behaviour and Bertha's forced confinement. Finally, the disempowered positions of both Septimus and Bertha make their situations even more pessimistic: keeping them relegated to the depths of madness.

Incarcerating Insanity

Where the world gradually loses control over a person's mind, it tries more desperately to dominate his body, epitomised in the centres of confinement, irrespective of the intent to rectify or evict. Throughout the novel, Bertha is allocated to the attic on the third storey, with multiple connotations of confinement as a slave, wife, and madwoman. The imprisonment of Bertha is primarily motivated by Rochester's desire to remove her from his consciousness and conscience so that he can freely enjoy the sexual and social licence accorded to a wealthy bachelor. However, this impulse is accompanied by a need to hide her from the sight of society as a whole to preserve his reputation, as remarked by Rochester:

> *That woman, who has so abused your long-suffering, so sullied your name, so outraged your honour, so blighted your youth, is not your wife, nor are you her* husband….Let her identity, *her connection with yourself, be buried in oblivion. (JE 372)*

Bertha's captivation, then, becomes a very private circumstance: bounded in the private home of her husband prompted by an individual's personal concern to escape shame and infamy. Foucault also states this as one of the reasons for putting the mad under restrictions: “In its most general form confinement is explained, or at least justified, by the desire to avoid scandal” (65). Carrying an aristocratic sensibility, Mr Rochester incarcerates Bertha to protect his familial honour, which explains the secrecy around her very existence, as public intervention has not yet fully taken madness in its purview. However, Mr Rochester doesn’t forget to add as a side note to Jane and the readers that he has the backing of medical opinion in his treatment of Bertha: “since the medical men had pronounced her mad, she had, of course,

been shut up" (370). He cites both the epistemological authority of medical science and the patronising power of men to validate Bertha's incarceration. Yet, still this circumstance of madness is considered a private affair, just a domestic affliction of Mr Rochester.

On the contrary, Woolf portrays madness outside the realm of domestic in its public ramifications, as Septimus is judged and sentenced by external forces. From the start, Septimus is put under the scrutiny of the community's gaze as various characters identify him as different: called "queer" by Maisie Johnson (*MD* 21), "odd" by Mrs Filmer (54), "desperate" by Peter Walsh (57), etc.; but, it is the medical opinion which becomes the most damning and commanding. Lisa Appignanesi comments on the increasing professionalisation and "scientification" of "mind-doctoring" "as the nineteenth century turned into twentieth" which leads to the growing institutionalisation of madness (1). Septimus is brought under the diagnosis of two medical authorities, who differ in their analysis but attempt to exert similar power of absolute judgment and control. In fact, Sir Bradshaw becomes a metonymic extension of the State itself performing the function of "Surveillance and Judgment" as detailed by Foucault:

> *The space reserved by society for insanity would now be haunted by those who were "from the other side" and who represented both the prestige of the authority that confines and the rigor of the reason that judges. The keeper intervenes, without weapons, without instruments of constraint, with observation and language only. (250)*

Backed by the supremacy of law and government, Bradshaw pronounces his verdict on Septimus' incarceration, as his role transforms from a medical practitioner to a policing agent

responsible for disciplining and curbing unprincipled behaviour. Correlating discipline and medical treatment, Foucault describes these mental asylums as follows: “The asylum sets itself the task of the homogeneous rule of morality, its rigorous extension to all those who tend to escape from it” (257). Identifying Septimus' trouble as a trouble for society, Bradshaw has identified himself as the judge/jailor, Septimus as the criminal and his "home" as the legitimate prison. Appignanesi further elaborates upon these asylums which start losing the attributes of genuine care and recovery, and become just centres of confinement, not very different from actual prisons: “As the pressure of numbers in the asylums built up over the coming decades, moral management with its advocacy of cure often gave away to simple, often brutal, containment” (192). The transformation of these asylums into state machinery is completed in Woolf’s novel. Unlike Bertha's case, madness can no longer remain a private concern nor can it be just concealed without regulation, a claim, concretised by Woolf in the last furious attempt of Lucrezia to bar the intrusion of the external authority in their home, failure of which results in Septimus’ eventual suicide. Woolf shows the insidious proliferation of such damning authority as the boundary between public and private blurs and madness becomes a concern of the state.

Confining madness is closely related to punishing it as it is seen as a deviancy or degeneration on the part of the individual. Containing this overflowing and threatening entity becomes a natural concern of society. Often defined as a withdrawal from the world into oneself, the cause for madness is also located inside the individual — an internal problem, a private failing — frequently obliviating the culpability of society in it. It is only by such transference of guilt, or by criminalising the individual deemed as mad, that such incarceration can be fully justified as a legitimate punishment. Rochester claims that his rejection of Bertha is not inspired by

her madness but by her faulty disposition which induced that madness:

> *[A] nature the most gross, impure, depraved I ever saw, was associated with mine, and called by the law and by society a part of me. And I could not rid myself of it by any legal proceedings: for the doctors now discovered that my wife (in original) was mad — her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity. (JE 369)*

He accuses her of "pigmy intellect" and "giant propensities" as he links her mental deficiency to her flawed character (369); he perceives her madness as inherited; finally, he attributes the rest of the seeds of madness to her nature which he sees "at once coarse and trite, perverse and imbecile" (369). In short, it is in Bertha and Bertha alone that he locates the origin of her insanity, as Peter Gurdin argues: "Bertha is presented as a woman who has purposely abandoned herself to sexual excess and indiscriminate infidelity, who has leapt rather than fallen" (148). Additionally, Bertha could also be read through the popular notion of a hysterical woman, as elaborated by Lisa Appignanesi: "beautiful, capricious, extravagant, sexually provocative, mysterious" (139), which puts the onus of her madness on her sexuality. She becomes either the Freudian victim of repressed sexuality: "for hysteria it follows that it is hardly possible to wrench it from the interconnected sexual neuroses" (Freud 142), or the product of the historically defined hysteria "that the womb, or uterus, was a free-floating entity which could leave its moorings when a woman was dissatisfied, to travel around the body and disrupt everything in its passage" (Appignanesi 142).

Comparably, Septimus is also presented as blameable for his plunge into madness. Society expresses an anxiety around Septimus' masculinity; perceived with a lack, he tries to fit in

through various prescribed methods such as sports or battlefield combat: "There in the trenches the change which Mr Brewer desired when he advised football was produced instantly; he developed manliness" (*MD* 70). The text also hints towards his latent homosexual desires for his officer, Evans, which further distances him from the traditional masculinity marked by heterosexual male bravado. Society has already declared Septimus deficient as a man, which gets further amplified by his inadequacy as a social being as he detaches from the community. Blanche H. Gelfant associates this isolation with Septimus' insanity:

> *Solitude without society is madness. Septimus cannot share his experience; he has lost the ability to relate to others except in a way that victimizes him. He feels himself either totally isolated or under coercion. His pathological withdrawal, first symptomized by a strange numbness at his friend's sudden death, has continued into his marriage. Shut in upon himself, he experiences horror at the sheer emptiness of life. (240)*

Gelfant suggests that he has become a victim of society as a whole where all his social interactions take up the connotation of oppression, even his marriage. It is not just a removal from society but developing an almost antithetical relationship with it. This prompts Dr Holmes to suggest to him to "take an interest in things outside himself" (*MD* 18) as he, too, attributes Septimus' madness to his internal movement. However, such readings ignore the contribution of social factors that aggravate their conditions; Bertha's madness coincides with her marriage: transplanted to a foreign land, battling racial prejudices, and enslaved by a male patron or a white conqueror. Despite his individuality, Septimus is one of the many casualties of the war: facing atrocities of war, yet,

conditioned to repress his emotions, to not feel anything. Unheard or misheard, Septimus is misunderstood — indicating his isolation, as not self-inflicted, but the failure of society itself to accommodate him. However, it is convenient for such authoritative forces of society to accuse the victim himself for his downfall, for his leap to madness, and for his eventual incarceration in the madhouses.

The Subversive Lunatic

The isolation of both these characters also stems from their difference or ability to challenge conventional ways of existing. Ultimately, their madness can be read as a liberating and transgressive force: a subaltern's act of defiance against rules of normalcy defined by the privileged. Often seen as an aberration, madness can turn into a subversion as a radical alterity or an uninhibited expression of self. The feminist impulse of Brontë's text has been a well-remarked upon topic, where Bertha is posited as a more pronounced challenge to patriarchy to Jane's subdued one. Jane's lament of women's constrained condition gets manifested in Bertha's frequent eruptions as interruptions to the restraints put on her, with the ultimate demolition of her (domestic) prison, Thornfield, and disabling of her captor/husband, Mr Rochester. “Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine” (*JE* 128), exclaims Jane as she ponders on her own relative lack of movement beyond the space of Thornfield. This is Brontë’s conspicuous allusion to Bertha which eventually vindicates her of supposedly violent actions as she counters patriarchal impositions put on her. Valerie Beattie argues: “Bertha specifically, and madness broadly, operate similarly to vocalize and denounce the philosophy of ‘suffer and be still’ applied to women in the nineteenth century” (503). Even Gilbert and Gubar read Bertha as an image of “hunger, rebellion, and rage” (339) — a potent feminist energy. Though

limited in her scope of protest, Bertha nevertheless strikes at moments of Jane’s anxiety about her own independent femininity. For instance, Jane’s initial surrender to Mr Rochester’s charm, her fear for her identity being subsumed by his in their marriage, and her eventual rejection of him due to his first marriage are all met by Bertha’s displays of anger. Bertha’s defiant fury might get overwritten and overpowered by Jane’s biased account and Rochester’s effective authority, respectively, however, Brontë embeds in the text an alternate reading of Bertha’s madness as an attempted mutiny against injunctions of silence and constrain preached to women.

Septimus, on the other hand, employs madness to speak truths, allowing Woolf to provide a scathing critique of war, nationalist institutions, and class divide. The post-war England is perceived by Septimus with a pessimism which almost resonates with T.S. Eliot’s equation of England to a cultural, spiritual, and physical “wasteland”: “It might be possible, Septimus thought, looking at England from the train window, as they left Newhaven; it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning” (*MD* 72). Septimus, as a casualty of the war, ultimately acts as a puncture to the hopeful optimism of the grandiose political discussions conducted in the closed chambers of the privileged like Mr Dalloway and Lady Bruton, and also, he deflates the celebratory elation and pretence of normalcy of Clarissa’s party. In fact, Septimus' final act of suicide is in one way an assertion of freedom and defiance of authorities who try to "convert" him; Clarissa, with an almost clairvoyant insight, contemplates Septimus' death:

> *A thing there was that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter. This he had preserved. Death was defiance. Death was an attempt to communicate, people*

> *feeling the impossibility of reaching the centre which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; rapture faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death. (MD148)*

The ”thing” that Clarissa is unable to preserve comprises Septimus’ resistance against the forces which try to convert him into symbols to serve their purpose, either as a valorised soldier of a victorious war, or a superfluous man necessary to have emigrated, or just a psychological case study. Avoiding such reductive interpretations of his life, Septimus’ death allows the possibility of proliferation of meanings in its ambiguity: “And why the devil he did it, Dr Holmes could not conceive” (121). Madness can then become a counter-force in society: isolated and "othered" as carrying unsocial currents, often attached to the already subordinated figures, and an enabler of transgressive and suppressed urges.

It is, however, Woolf's text that explicitly indicts society for its indifference and insensitivity towards madness, as Septimus becomes relatable to the readers with access to his mental thought processes. On the other hand, Bertha is described only through her physical acts, and those, too, are mediated through the narratives of the other. This difference can be linked to the difference in the preoccupation of the Victorians with the body and the twentieth century's interest in the mind. The emergence of psychoanalysis, at the turn of the century, opens the possibility of reading the mind and suggests multiple layers of the conscious and unconscious mind, which, in turn, is borrowed by the Modernist literature forming “the dense web of connections that joined the aesthetic and psychological domains in a common probing of sexuality, subjectivity, and self-identity” (Micale 1). Most significantly, Freudian methods of psychoanalysis directly correspond with the Modernist methods of presenting the mind — not only in the newness of both techniques — but, through their

employment of an “amalgam of free association, dream, and transference continually reworked by constructions, rememberings, and interpretations” (Brenkman 173). Woolf, in her famous essay, “Modern Fiction”, expresses a similar sentiment: “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness” (161). Woolf, simultaneously, applies the pseudo-scientific psychoanalysis and the formal narrative style of 'stream of consciousness' to Septimus' madness, which enables the rationalisation of madness — tracing its causality — or an assertion that “our normal mental life is thus intimately related to insanity” (Johnson 144) with its intricate, yet, unpredictable pattern of free association. This strips away the negative connotations attached to madness as Woolf posits Septimus as a prophetic figure with revelatory qualities, where Septimus becomes a mouthpiece of transcendental ideas and metaphysical truths. Nicole Ward Jouve also expresses her optimism for Woolf's portrayal of madness: “Madness here is taken to mean a ‘particular ontological position’, one that she knew and used as a source of insight” (259). Unlike Brontë's text, where Bertha's madness is manifested solely through her body thus limiting her scope of subjectivity and humanity, Woolf makes Septimus one of the central consciousness in her text, possibly, only second to Mrs Dalloway herself.

Conclusion

Septimus' story runs parallel to Mrs Dalloway as he is her double, likewise, Bertha is the reflection of Jane. Peter Walsh identifies an existentialist strain in Clarissa who “evolved this atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness” (*MD* 63) as she attempts to suppress the “brutal monster” (10) inside her which takes dominance in Septimus' case, pushing

him towards chaos, where her world is full of life-affirming parties while his is “about to burst into flames” (13). Alex Page also identifies Septimus as Clarissa’s “other”, possibly a dangerous double: “One way of looking at him [Septimus], then, is as a warning, the warning that beneath Clarissa's regulated, shiny life lies an abyss, that her extraordinary gifts contain the seeds of poison” (123). Bertha is also perceived as Jane's mirror image: an outlet for Jane's repressed sexual, violent and rebellious tendencies. Gilbert and Gubar support this assertion as they, too, associate Bertha with the dangerous, repressed qualities of Jane, as they claim: “Bertha, in other words, is Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead”. Psychoanalytically then, Bertha and Septimus become a literary imitation of the classic Freudian transference of the protagonist's repressed impulses, or “the id to her ego” (Page 123). However, putting it in the social context, both the novelists recognise the need to externalise the "mad" urges of their heroines into secondary characters for them to integrate with society (commanding affluence through aristocratic marriages). It is these secondary characters, the doubles, which are eventually killed off in both narratives, reinstating the irreconcilability of madness with the society — a society, which confronts madness through "othering", banishing, misrepresenting or misappropriating.

References

1. Appignanesi, Lisa. *Mad, Bad, and Sad: Women and the Mind Doctors*, W.W. Norton & Company, 2008.
2. Beattie, Valerie. “THE MYSTERY AT THORNFIELD: REPRESENTATIONS OF MADNESS IN ‘JANE EYRE’”. *Studies in the Novel,* vo. 28, no. 4, 1996, pp. 493–505. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29533162 [accessed 5 January 2022].

3. Brenkman, John, "Freud the Modernist". *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880-1940*, edited by Mark S. Micale, Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 172-96.
4. Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Penguin Books, 2012.
5. Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard, Routledge, 2001.
6. Freud, Sigmund. "On the Psychotherapy of Hysteria". *Studies in Hysteria*, Translated by Nicola Luckhurst, Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 255-306.
7. Gelfant, Blanche H. "Love and Conversion in "Mrs. Dalloway"". *Criticism,* vol. 8, no. 3, 1966, pp. 229–45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23094188 [accessed 6 January 2022].
8. Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress". *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination,* Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 336-71.
9. Gurdin, Peter. "Jane and the Other Mrs. Rochester: Excess and Restraint in "Jane Eyre"". *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1977, pp. 145–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/1344783.
10. Herman, David. "Re-minding Modernism". *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, edited by David Herman, University of Nebraska Press, 2011, pp. 243-72.
11. Johnson, George M. ""The Spirit of the Age": Virginia Woolf's Response to Second Wave Psychology". *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1994, pp. 139–64. https://doi.org/10.2307/441800.

12. Jouve, Nicole Ward. "Virginia Woolf and Psychoanalysis". *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf,* edited by Sue Roe and Susan Sellers, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 245–72. https://doi:10.1017/CCOL0521623936.012.
13. McPherson, Karen S. "Speaking Madness: Mrs. Dalloway". *Incriminations: Guilty Women/Telling Stories*, edited by Karen S. McPherson, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 130–57.
14. Meyer, Susan L. "Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy of "Jane Eyre"". *Victorian Studies,* vol. 33, no. 2, 1990, pp. 247–68. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3828358 [accessed 4 January 2022].
15. Micale, Mark S. "The Modernist Mind: A Map". *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880-1940*, edited by Mark S. Micale, Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 1-20.
16. Page, Alex. "A DANGEROUS DAY: MRS. DALLOWAY DISCOVERS HER DOUBLE". *Modern Fiction Studies,* vol. 7, no. 2, 1961, pp. 115–24. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26277223 [accessed 7 January 2022].
17. Woolf, Virginia. "Modern Fiction". *The Essays of Virginia Woolf. Volume 4: 1925 to 1928*, edited by Andrew McNeille, The Hogarth Press, 1984, pp. 157-65.
18. ---. *Mrs Dalloway*. Worldview Publications, 2017.

Radhika Gupta

Radhika is a student of English Literature, pursuing her Master's in Modern Literature and Culture from King's College London. She completed her Bachelor's in English Literature from Hindu College, University of Delhi. Her research interests include Feminist Studies, Postcolonial Writings, and Nineteenth-Century English Fiction. Her postgraduate thesis involves the study of Jane Austen's novels from the perspective of a modern lens.

Get Your Book Reviewed

If you have got any book published and are looking for a book review, contact us. We provide book review writing service for a fee. We (1) write book review (2) publish review in CLRI (3) conduct an interview with the author (4) publish interview in CLRI. Know more here.

Authors & Books

We publish book releases, Press Release about books and authors, book reviews, blurbs, author interviews, and any news related to authors and books for free. We welcomes authors, publishers, and literary agents to send their press releases. Visit our website https://page.co/Vw17Q.